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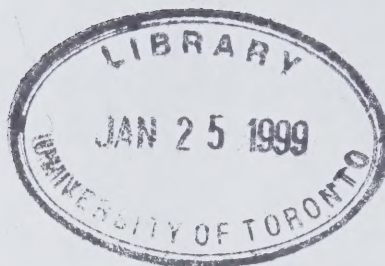
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BUSINESS PLAN 1997-1998



MINISTRY OF LABOUR





Copies of this document, ministry business plans and a brochure entitled *Making Progress, Managing Change: A Report to Ontario Taxpayers*, are available free of charge from Publications Ontario, 880 Bay St., Toronto. Out-of-town customers may write to Publications Ontario, 50 Grosvenor St., Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Telephone (416) 326-5300 or toll-free in Ontario 1-800-668-9938. For TTY inquiries call (416) 325-3408 (Toronto) or toll-free in Ontario 1-800-268-7095. For electronic access to this document and ministry business plans, visit the Ontario Government web site at www.gov.on.ca and click on "What's New".

On peut se procurer gratuitement des exemplaires du présent document, des plans d'activités des ministères et d'une brochure intitulée, *La marche du progrès - La gestion du changement : Rapport aux contribuables de l'Ontario*, auprès de Publications Ontario, 880, rue Bay, Toronto. Les personnes de l'extérieur de Toronto peuvent écrire à Publications Ontario, 50, rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Téléphone : (416) 326-5300 (Toronto) ou, sans frais d'interurbain en Ontario : 1 800 668-9938. Les malentendants peuvent composer le (416) 325-3408 (Toronto) ou, sans frais en Ontario, le 1 800 268-7095. Pour avoir accès électroniquement au présent document et aux plans d'activités des ministères, visitez le site Web du gouvernement à l'adresse suivante : www.gov.on.ca et cliquez sur Quoi de neuf?



Hon. Elizabeth
Witmer

The globalization of business, increased competitive pressures, the shift to a service-based economy and rapid technological change have resulted in dramatic changes in the workplace.

The Ministry of Labour is responding to these challenges with legislative proposals to update all of our employment laws and

by focusing our energies and resources on setting, communicating and enforcing workplace standards which encourage greater workplace self-reliance.

Minister's Message

In order to make Ontario's workplaces among the safest in the world, we have a new vision and strategy for health and safety. As part of this strategy, increased workplace inspections have contributed to a decline in injuries. This past year we released a discussion paper on reform of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. We also introduced Bill 99, which would restore the financial viability of the Workers' Compensation Board and revitalize the system.

We have cut red tape, increased self-reliance in the workplace and enhanced protection for vulnerable employees with our Bill 49 amendments to the *Employment Standards Act*. Our discussion paper on reform of the *Act* will soon be released. It will enable us to introduce more flexible legislation to respond to the changing needs of the workplace and the changing employer-employee relationship.

We are cutting red tape and expediting the conciliation and adjudication processes by consolidating the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the Office of Adjudication and implementing alternative methods of resolving labour disputes without the need for costly formal hearings.

Our reforms support the government's goal of creating a positive environment for economic growth, investment and job creation. I am confident that this business plan will move us closer to that goal. ♦

The Honourable Elizabeth Witmer
Minister of Labour

Making Progress—Managing Change

Ontario's Business Plans - Year Two

The government has a plan in place and that plan is working. The objectives are to invest in priority services; maintain safe and secure communities; cut taxes to create jobs; and make government work for people.

This ministry's business plan supports these objectives. It is our report to you. It highlights what has been done over the past year, what is planned for the coming year, what targets have been set and how results will be measured.

The services that are valued most are being protected and improved. Jobs are being created. The economy is growing at an impressive rate. Taxes are being cut. The way this ministry operates is now simpler, more open and accountable.

This plan also demonstrates that much remains to be done to accomplish our goals. It charts a course for the future with specific action plans. The government is committed to refining and improving business planning and business practices across the Ontario Public Service. Taxpayers have a right to know how public funds are used. Your comments are welcome.

For those who would like to know what is planned across government, all ministry business plans are available free of charge at Publications Ontario and on the Ontario government web site at www.gov.on.ca under "What's New".

In addition, the government has produced a brochure entitled *Making Progress, Managing Change: A Report to Ontario Taxpayers*, which lists major initiatives from all 22 business plans. This brochure is available free of charge from Publications Ontario in Toronto (416) 326-5300 (local calls) or 1-800-668-9938 (toll-free long distance calls). For TTY inquiries, call (416) 325-3408 (Toronto) or toll free in Ontario at 1-800-268-7095:◆

Ministry Vision

Our vision is a province which encourages new investment, jobs and prosperity and which has labour laws and regulations designed to meet the challenges of the global economy and the workplaces of the 21st century.

To realize this vision, the Ministry is developing proposed reforms to all major labour legislation to create a more flexible and responsive legal and regulatory framework. This will enable us to create an environment that makes Ontario workplaces among the safest in the world, where people are treated fairly and where employers and employees work together in harmony.

Safe, fair and harmonious workplaces are essential to the social and economic well-being of the people of Ontario.

We believe such conditions will be achieved when employers, employees and unions work co-operatively on their own initiative to meet or exceed a minimum level of well-enforced employment and health and safety standards. Ontario's labour laws must encourage and strengthen this kind of self-reliance. ♦

Key Strategies

The Ministry of Labour's goal is to ensure safe, fair and harmonious workplaces.

Achieving this while still remaining responsive to the rapidly changing workplace environment will require the Ministry to deliver programs and services in ways that are innovative and efficient.

The Ministry's resources are being directed towards the protection of the most vulnerable workers and towards encouraging workplace self-reliance. The organization of the Ministry continues to be streamlined to better deliver core services and improve accountability.

Accordingly, the Ministry's key strategic commitments are to:

- encourage new investment and job creation by developing proposed reforms to all labour laws to establish fair, flexible and enforceable standards which recognize the demands of the new global economy;
- focus the Ministry of Labour's role on the creation, communication and enforcement of fair and reasonable workplace standards while encouraging greater self-reliance in the achievement of these standards in the workplace;
- modernize labour dispute resolution mechanisms to meet the needs of the changing workplace, and;
- remain firmly committed to a strong enforcement program, aimed at helping the most vulnerable.♦

Core Businesses

The core businesses considered essential to fulfilling the Ministry of Labour's mission include:

- **Occupational Health and Safety** — the setting, communicating and enforcement of occupational health and safety laws and regulations intended to reduce or eliminate workplace injury or illness. This covers occupational health and safety in construction, mining and industrial sectors.
- **Employment Rights and Responsibilities** — the establishment and promotion of fair, flexible and enforceable employment standards which ensure that vulnerable workers are protected. This core business is delivered by the Employment Standards Program of the Ministry, the Pay Equity Commission and the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal.
- **Labour Relations** — the promotion and maintenance of balanced, stable and harmonious labour relations while encouraging greater self-reliance in the workplace. The Ontario Labour Relations Board and Labour Management Services of the Ministry deliver this core business. ♦

Core Businesses

Occupational Health and Safety	
Goal	Result
To create an environment that makes Ontario workplaces among the safest in the world.	Employers and employees who are more effective in preventing injury and illness and in keeping their workplaces healthy and safe.
Strategy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Review and develop legislative proposals to modernize the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> and establish and strengthen the internal responsibility system as the foundation of Ontario's approach to the reduction of workplace injuries and illness and to meet the needs of today's rapidly changing workplaces.■ The Workers' Compensation Board will refocus itself as a workplace insurance plan with a new emphasis on preventing workplace injury and illness.■ The Ministry, the Workers' Compensation Board and other health and safety organizations will work together to develop a co-ordinated workplace injury and illness prevention strategy for Ontario.	

Core Businesses

Employment Rights and Responsibilities	
Goal	Result
To establish a globally competitive workplace environment with working conditions that are among the best in the world.	A competitive and world class jurisdiction where all employers meet the requirements of fair, flexible and enforceable employment standards.
Strategy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Initiate a major review of the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> to identify appropriate minimum standards and the means to improve enforcement, leading to the development and introduction in the Legislature of a proposed new Act. ■ Promote, investigate and enforce employment standards. ■ Shift from a solely complaint-driven enforcement program to one that includes planned inspections. 	

Core Businesses

Labour Relations	
Goal	Result
To promote and maintain stable and harmonious labour relations.	A positive labour relations environment that attracts investment and jobs and promotes self-reliance through negotiation.
Strategy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Focus the Ministry's mediation and conciliation services on those labour disputes in which the public interest is greatest, and;■ Eliminate service duplication and improve efficiency by consolidating similar labour relations services from across government.	

Key Performance Measures

Occupational Health and Safety		
RESULTS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STANDARDS/ TARGETS
An environment that makes Ontario workplaces among the safest in the world where employers and employees effectively prevent injury and illness.	Rate of lost time injuries resulting from workplace accidents.	An average 6% yearly reduction in the rate of lost time injuries, as part of an overall reduction target of 30% over five years starting in fiscal 95/96.
Employment Rights and Responsibilities		
RESULTS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STANDARDS/ TARGETS
Fair pay and working conditions.	Rate of compliance with the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> and the <i>Pay Equity Act</i> .	Base line data for measurement of compliance levels will be collected this year.
Faster and more accessible service to resolve claims submitted to the Ministry.	Turn around time for completed investigations.	25% reduction in time to complete investigations. 20% reduction in case backlog
Labour Relations		
RESULTS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STANDARDS/ TARGETS
Harmonious and stable labour relations environment.	Settlements of disputes without strike or lockout.	Maintain 95% settlement of all disputes without strike or lockout.

Report on 1996-97 Achievements & 1997-98 Commitments

Occupational Health and Safety

On-the-job lost time injury rates decreased by 17 per cent in 1996 while the number of inspections increased by 49 per cent. This continuing decline in the rate of lost time injuries is part of the Ministry's overall goal of a 30 per cent reduction over a five year period starting in 1995/96, averaging six per cent per year.

A review of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* was launched in February 1997 with the release of a wide ranging discussion paper. Consultations were held in March and April and the input received will be reviewed over the summer. Proposed legislation will be introduced in the Ontario Legislature this fiscal year.

Regulations are also being amended to remove red tape and improve self-reliance in the workplace. For example, consultations were completed in the spring of 1997 on proposed amendments to regulations affecting mining, construction and industrial workplaces.

The Ministry is working on a co-ordinated approach to health and safety with all of its partners. For example, work is underway with the Workers' Compensation Board, the Institute for Work and Health and the Safe Workplace Associations to establish general and sector specific measures to evaluate health and safety performance. A new workplace injury and illness prevention strategy will be developed jointly by the Ministry of Labour and the Workers' Compensation Board this year.

With the introduction of *Bill 99* in November 1996, the Ministry took the last step in the complete overhaul of the workers' compensation system. If approved by the Legislature, the new Act will come into force on January 1, 1998. *Bill 99* was designed to restore financial viability to the system, integrate the formerly separate roles of injury prevention and compensation in one agency, and refocus the system as a workplace insurance plan. ♦

Employment Rights and Responsibilities

A new policy and interpretation manual for the *Employment Standards Act* was published in both print and on CD-ROM. A new plain language Employers Guide to the *Employment Standards Act* was published and is available on the Ministry of Labour Web site. An easy-to-use Fax-On-Demand system was introduced.

The average time for investigation of individual cases under the *Employment Standards Act* was reduced by 14 per cent last year. A further 25 per cent reduction will be achieved by the end of this fiscal year so that 70 per cent of investigations will be concluded within 90 days. The number of outstanding claims was reduced last year, a trend that will continue this year.

To promote workplace self-reliance and ensure a level playing field for Ontario businesses, the Ministry will begin to shift from a solely complaints-driven enforcement program to one which includes planned inspections.

The first phase of employment standards reform started with passage of Bill 49. The legislation reduces red tape and encourages workers and employers to show greater self-reliance in resolving workplace disputes. The next phase will move ahead this year with release of a discussion paper on major changes to employment standards laws, leading to the introduction of proposed new legislation. ♦

Labour Relations

In 1996-97 the Ministry moved to streamline administration and service delivery and to focus its labour relations program on helping to resolve those disputes which are in the greatest public interest:

- 94.9 per cent of the collective agreements that expired between April and December 1996 were settled without a strike or lockout and Ministry mediators assisted parties to establish a number of precedent-setting collective agreements;
- in the public and broader public sectors, a record number of contracts expired and the Ministry contributed to a smooth restoration of collective bargaining at the end of the "Social Contract" period.

The Ministry anticipates that 95 per cent of the collective agreements that expire in 1997-98 will be settled without a work stoppage.

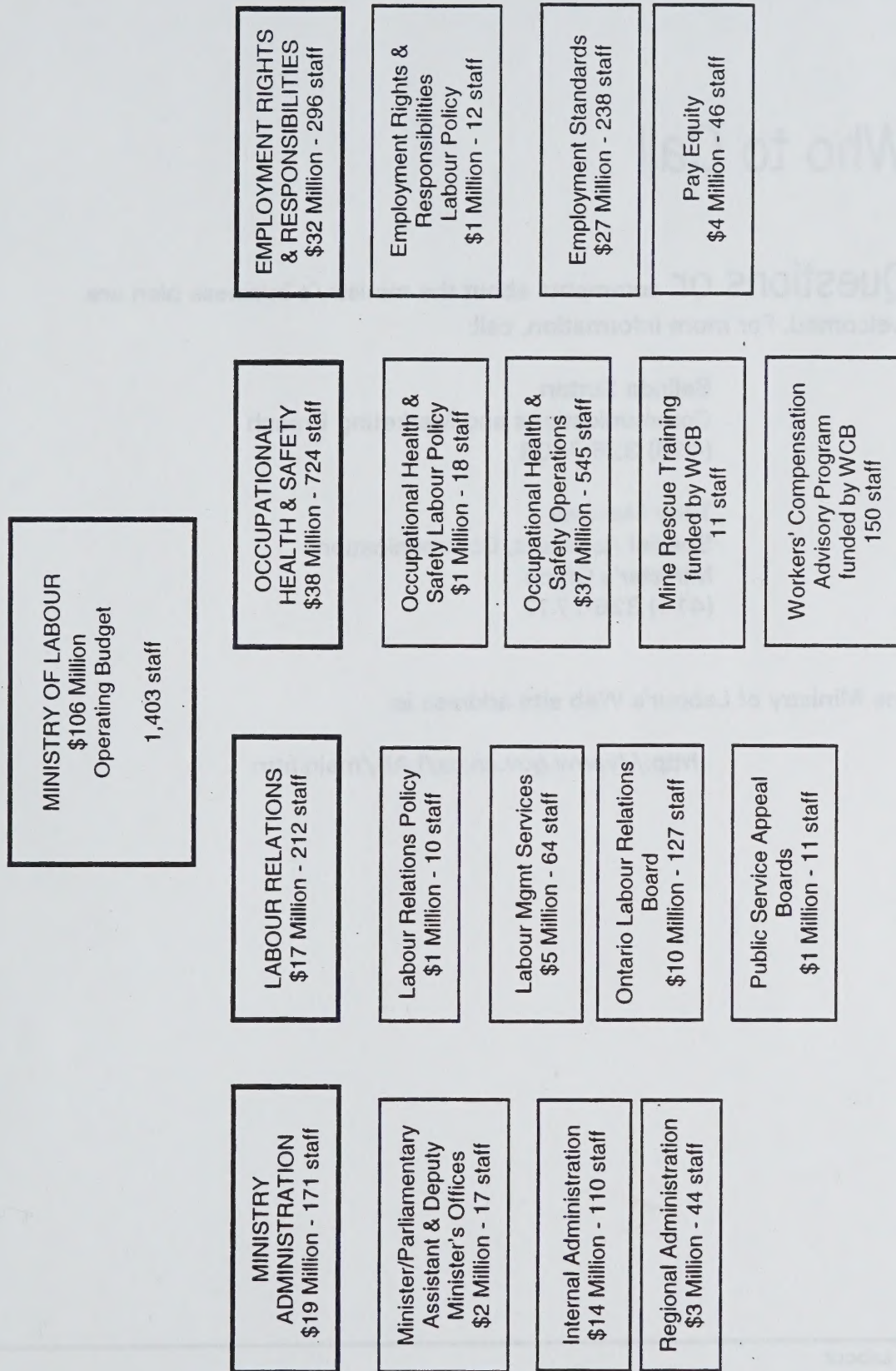
A process was started to reduce the time required to administer the conciliation process and to provide more timely collective bargaining information. By the end of 1997-98 the Ministry anticipates that processing times will be reduced by 20 per cent from 1995/96.

The Ministry also moved to streamline the administration of employment adjudication by implementing an administrative merger of the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the Office of Adjudication. For appeals under the *Employment Standards Act* during 1996-97, the result has been a 50 per cent reduction in the time between filing an appeal and the hearing date as well as the elimination of the backlog.

In 1997-98, the Ministry will be working to achieve similar results for appeals under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

In addition, the Ministry will be expanding the use of new, innovative, alternate dispute resolution processes and taking further steps to consolidate labour relations programs from across government. ♦

Ministry of Labour Core Businesses & Resource Allocations 1997-98



Note: Staff numbers are shown as full time equivalents.

Who to Call

Questions or comments about the ministry's business plan are welcomed. For more information, call:

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Communications and Marketing Branch
(416) 326-7403

Tony Maxwell
Special Assistant, Communications
Minister's Office
(416) 326-7713

The Ministry of Labour's Web site address is:

<http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/main.htm>

Who to Call

QUESTIONS OF PARLIAMENT about the Government of Ontario
should be directed to the following offices:

General Enquiries
Communications and Public Affairs
416-326-7400

Press Enquiries
Office of the Attorney General
Minister's Office
416-326-7400

The Ministry of Labour's Wage and Labour Board

Wage and Labour Board
416-326-7400

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